



Friends of Nike Site Summit

Our mission is to preserve site summit as a monument to Cold War veterans and to educate present and future generations about the Cold War

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October 10, 2008

Allan Lucht
Directorate of Public Works
ATTN: IMPC-FRA-PWE (LUCHT)
724 Postal Service Loop, #4500
Anchorage, AK 99505-4500

Dear Mr. Lucht:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the informal Section 213 report¹ prepared by the National Park Service at the request of the U.S. Army Alaska upon a recommendation of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The Alaska office of the National Park Service (NPS) conducted the evaluation to facilitate the Section 106 compliance process for the development of a management strategy for Nike Site Summit.

Using the same steps as outlined for a formal Section 213 review, the NPS considered the significance of Nike Site Summit, the effects of the proposed undertaking on the property and actions that could be taken to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects that might result from the proposed undertaking.

In general the FONSS is pleased and concurs with the findings of the informal Section 213 Report. FONSS notes that the NPS found:

- Nine of the twelve buildings and structures that were proposed for demolition in the Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment (FONSI/EA) are actually viable candidates for long-term stabilization.
- The demolition of those twelve buildings would have significant adverse impact on the historical integrity of the Nike Site Summit Historic District.
- A relatively modest stabilization program can help preserve the buildings structurally.
- The adverse effects of the three building recommended for demolition could be mitigated through selective stabilization of additional buildings at Site

Officially entitled "Evaluation of the Impact of the U.S. Army's Proposed Management Strategy on Nike Site Summit Historic District and Recommendations for the Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation of Adverse Effect; Prepared by the Staff of the Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service on Behalf of the U.S. Army Garrison Alaska in Coordination with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation."

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Summit in combination with interpretive wayside development and the preparation of informative brochures.

- The Section 213 review confirmed and reinforced that in 2008, Nike Site Summit retains the significance of its listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District of National Level significance. Site Summit is found to be an **"exemplary example of its kind,"** which **"displays exceptional physical integrity"** and **"places it in a unique category among the surviving historic Nike installations."** According to the Keeper of the National Register **"no other nomination ... submitted since 1996 remotely compares to the Nike Site Summit's listing on the National Register."**

The NPS determined that nine structures the Section 213 report found to be in 'Fair' condition, were viable candidates for long-term stabilization. FONSS strongly agrees with the NPS recommendation that those nine structures be retained and stabilized. The loss of those nine structures would significantly and adversely effect the ability of the Nike Site Summit Historic District to illustrate the entirety of the functions of the site. The details of the potential loss of those nine structures are well documented in the NPS Section 213 report and FONSS strongly concurs that those characteristic and defining features must not be lost forever. The three other structures were determined to be in 'Fair' or 'Poor' condition. These three structures include the Dog Kennel, the Battery Control Building, and the Launching Control Building.

I. The Recommended Stabilization Treatment for the **Dog Kennel** is "documentation and demolition". FONSS concurs with this recommendation.

II. The **Launching Control Building** has three components with different materials: the Boiler/Mechanical, of cast concrete with a metal roof structure; the wood framed central portion; and an addition of Concrete Masonry Units, which likely held a generator. The NPS's overall Recommended Stabilization Treatment for the Launching Control Building is "documentation and demolition". Although it was noted in the report that documentation and removal of this building may be the most cost effective solution, it is not certain at this time that it is the most cost effective solution. FONSS recommends waiting for the comparative cost analysis to determine the cost of remediation versus the cost for hazardous mitigation as part of demolition. FONSS also requests that consideration be given to preserving the two concrete and CMU components. According to the report the structure and roof of this building appear to be sound. If two or possibly three of the three component buildings can be preserved it would significantly enhance the overall historical integrity of the site, as otherwise, "Loss of the Battery Building and the Launching Control Building would result in a 100% loss of the physical representation of Launching control functions and 50% of the Missile Maintenance functions at Nike Site Summit Historic District". While the loss of the siding over the wood framed central portion of the building has apparently led to some degradation of the exterior walls, the interior walls and the roof structure appeared to be sound, and could be relatively in-expensive to stabilize.

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III. There are two Recommended Stabilization Treatments for the **Battery Control Building**.

A. For the concrete wing section the recommended treatment is:

1. Secure exterior doors and windows to prevent unauthorized entry and weather infiltration.
2. Re-roof as soon as possible.
3. Mitigate lead paint and asbestos tiles where necessary.

The FONSS concurs with the NPS recommendation and encourages U.S. Army Garrison Alaska to pursue items #1 and #2 as soon as possible.

B. For the Wood Frame wing the NPS recommended treatment is:

1. Prepare comparison cost estimates to determine the cost of remediation for preservation versus the cost for hazardous mitigation as part of demolition of this wing.
2. If demolition is pursued, the concrete foundation, concrete steps and walkway leading to the front of the building, flag pole, concrete blocks and steel tie rods at the back of the building, concrete firewall separating the north and south wings, and radar towers could be left intact as an interpretative footprint of what once existed.

In general the FONSS concurs with the NPS recommended treatment. Loss of the wood frame wing of the Battery Control Building would be unfortunate as its prominent size and presence at Site Summit helps convey the overall historic magnitude and significance of the area, and is visible throughout Anchorage. The FONSS agrees with the NPS that "loss of the Battery Control Building would have a severe impact on Nike Site Summit Historic District's physical ability to convey certain functions of a Nike Hercules Missile Battery" as it truly is "an iconic architectural symbol for the Alaska Nike Sites", and the only one that remains. Demolition of the Battery Control Building would "result in 100% loss of representation" of the Command, Troop Housing and Support functions at the Nike Site Summit Historic District. Central to all anecdotal descriptions of life at Nike Site Summit is the harsh weather conditions that they endured, and the FONSS encourages the Army to take a close look at the comparative costs of demolition and stabilization of the Battery Building, the body, heart and brains of Nike Site Summit. If the comparison cost estimate is not favorable to preservation however, preservation of as much as possible of the non-wood structures and foundations appears to be the best viable alternative. The FONSS recommends again, however, that the completion of the comparative cost analysis be completed before any final action is undertaken.

Both the NPS Section 213 report and the upcoming comparative cost analysis report are based on visual assessments of what might be or might not be potentially hazardous materials. A comprehensive hazardous materials survey must be completed on all structures in order to comply with EPA and OSHA regulations prior to any demolition or stabilization activities and the findings of those reports will likely change based on the haz-mat survey. The FONSS strongly recommends that the comparative cost analysis be updated as necessary prior to actual demolition of any structures.

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The Friends of Nike Site Summit are encouraged by the NPS Section 213 report and by the interest shown by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the Section 106 negotiations for the management of Nike Site Summit. We remain committed to working with the U.S. Army Garrison Alaska in working out a mutually agreeable resolution to the Section 106 negotiations.

Sincerely,

Bob French
Friends of Nike Site Summit

cc: (by e-mail)

Don Klima, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Brian Turner, Western Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation
Addision D. Davis, IV, Army Federal Preservation Officer
Judy Bittner, Alaska SHPO
Hans Neidig, U.S. Department of Interior, Office of the Secretary
Ted Birkedal, Chief, Division of Cultural Resources, NPS Alaska
Fran Seager-Boss, Alaska Association for Historic Preservation
Ken Morton, American Society of Landscape Architects
CJ Stiegele, Anchorage Ski Club, Inc.
Darrel Hess, Municipality of Anchorage
Ezio Nurisio, Nike Historical Society
Francis Gary Powers, Jr., The Cold War Museum

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